

\$116 million in new and retained sales
\$35 million in new investments
1,466 jobs created or retained

The **Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership** (WMEP) enhances the success of Wisconsin's small to midsize manufacturers by providing expert and accessible services in the areas of growth and innovation, continuous improvement, training, export assistance, supply chain management and profitable sustainability. WMEP is a strong advocate for manufacturers in Wisconsin and supports Wisconsin manufacturing at a national level.

WMEP serves manufacturers in Southeast Wisconsin.

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The **Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center** (NWMOC) is Located on the campus of UW-Stout, Wisconsin's Polytechnic University. NWMOC provides at-your-location services by seasoned practitioners with expertise in manufacturing management. The experts at NWMOC deliver integrated services to manufacturers in 33 northern and western Wisconsin counties. The NWMOC is part of UW-Stout's Discovery Center, which provides applied research to foster discovery and innovation-based solutions.

WMEP serves manufacturers in Northwest Wisconsin.

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* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in FY2009

CLIENT SUCCESS: GENERAL METALWORKS

"I truly believe in WMEP and their mission and what they provide for businesses like mine. The WMEP manufacturing specialists care about the business. They know us and our processes. I feel like they're part of my team."

Mary Isbister, President
General MetalWorks

Revenues Grow, Quality Increases for General MetalWorks with ISO 9001 and WMEP

General MetalWorks, like many metal fabrication shops, had not documented its processes. Company president Mary Isbister realized the organization would benefit from having standard procedures in place and turned to the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

WMEP led General MetalWorks through the registration process for the ISO 9001:2000. "ISO 9001 is a management system that defines the minimum requirements for a business," said Rick Goodson, WMEP portfolio/project manager for General MetalWorks. "Most viable businesses already meet 70 to 75 percent of what's in the standard. The newest revision level (2000) relies less on documentation and instead emphasizes your business's processes as your customers see them and as you see them. It leaves it up to you to decide how much documentation you need in order to define your processes."

WMEP and MetalWorks identified the processes they needed to document and identified people to own those processes. They also established metrics to track the efficiency of the processes. With their order entry process, they began measuring how long it took to enter orders, since sometimes orders arriving late in the day were not entered until the next day, costing them a day of lead time. They established a maximum time of one day to get orders into the system and are now in the process of shortening that metric. They also examined their subcontractor purchasing process and began tracking vendor delivery performance to improve lead times. The work to define the processes and their metrics increased ownership of the processes. Previous work to establish procedures was done by a consultant, but the procedures were not implemented by the company because employees were not involved in their development. By establishing both procedures and metrics, people began to see that they could have a direct effect on the change. The ISO work also broke down the barrier that often exists between production and the administrative personnel. "By having metrics and demonstrating continuous improvement on both sides, people understand that this whole company is only as strong as our weakest link," said Isbister. "The work has resulted in an unexpected side effect -- a team culture where people can see how all the processes are linked."

Results:

- * Exceeded goal of 99.5 percent defect-free parts.
- * Decreased shipping errors by 67 percent.
- * Increased business by 25 percent per year.
- * Reduced finished goods inventory by 94 percent.
- * Reduced raw stock inventory from 6 weeks worth to 3 days.
- * Reduced lead time by 64 percent.

Increased sales by
\$4.8 million